

IN THE CLAIMS:

1 1. (Cancelled).

1 2. (Currently Amended) A mail piece tracking system including:

2 A. one or more servers that perform the operations of:

3 i. acquiring information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services or delivery
4 companies, and from said information creating a digital shadow-linked information for each
5 mail piece containing at least one of: information about the mail piece, delivery status
6 information, address and delivery particulars, a digital copy of the mail piece, a summary of
7 the mail piece, and an excerpt from the mail piece;

8 ~~ii. delivery status information and associating said linked~~ linking the mail piece delivery
9 status information with respective user identifiers, thereby informing the user of an incoming
10 mail piece providing the user with the capability to track and trace mail pieces sent to or from
11 one or more addresses;

12 ~~iii.~~ receiving one or more messages from the senders of the respective mail pieces and
13 linking to the delivery status information an attachment consisting of the one or more
14 messages from the senders of the mail pieces; and

15 ~~iii. iv. producing on a user's personal web page providing said linked information listings of~~
16 ~~the delivery status information for the mail pieces directed to or sent from~~ respective users
17 that are associated with the user identifiers; and

18 ~~iv. including links to the respective messages in the listings of the delivery status~~
19 ~~information allowing the user to perform at least one of: sending or receiving a message,~~
20 ~~receiving or paying a bill, and verifying information based upon a digital signature; and~~

21 B. one or more browsers or client executables through which the respective users
22 associated with the user identifiers access ~~the delivery status~~ linked ~~information, and the~~
23 ~~links to the respective messages.~~

1 3. (Withdrawn) A mail piece tracking system including:

2 A. one or more servers for linking mail piece delivery status information with user
3 identifiers, associating with the delivery status information for a given mail piece related
4 transaction information, producing listings of the delivery status information for mail pieces
5 directed to the respective users, and including a link to the transaction information in the
6 listing of the delivery status information;

7 B. one or more browsers or client executables through which the respective users
8 associated with the user identifiers access the delivery status information.

1 4. (Currently Amended) A mail piece tracking system including:

2 A. one or more servers that perform the operations of:

3 i. acquiring information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services and
4 delivery companies and creating ~~a digital shadow~~ linked information for each mail piece
5 containing delivery status information and linking the mail piece delivery status information
6 with respective user identifiers, thereby informing the user of an incoming package;

7 ii. generating a personal web page for a user providing ~~receiving~~ said linked information
8 relating to the contents of the respective mail pieces from the senders of the mail pieces and
9 displaying said information on said user's personal web page and linking to the delivery
10 status information an attachment consisting of the information relating to the contents of the
11 respective mail pieces;

12 iii. producing on said user's personal web page respective listings of the delivery status
13 information for mail pieces directed to or from respective users that are associated with the
14 user identifiers; and

15 iv. associating the information relating to the contents of the respective mail pieces with
16 the mail piece delivery status information in the listings; and

17 B. one or more browsers or client executables running on a user's personal computer or
18 at another workstation at which the user may log in, and through which the respective users
19 associated with the user identifiers access the delivery status information and the linked
20 information relating to the contents of the respective mail pieces.

1 5. – 6. (Cancelled).

- 1 7. (Withdrawn) A mail piece tracking system including:
- 2 A. one or more servers for linking mail piece delivery status information with user
- 3 identifiers producing listings of the delivery status information for mail pieces directed to the
- 4 respective users, and including in the mail piece delivery status information:
- 5 i. a sender identifier,
- 6 ii. a mail type identifier,
- 7 iii. a delivery service identifier, and
- 8 iv. links to on-line information provided by or associated with the sender.
- 1 8. (Cancelled)
- 1 9. (Withdrawn) The method of tracking and tracing mail pieces of claim 10 wherein
- 2 A. the step of linking mail piece delivery status information to the user identifiers
- 3 includes updating the information, and
- 4 B. the step of providing a listing of mail piece delivery status information includes
- 5 providing in the list the updated information.
- 1 10. (Withdrawn) A method for tracking and tracing mail pieces including the steps of:
- 2 A. associating respective users with user identifiers;
- 3 B. associating with the identified users mail pieces directed to or sent by the respective
- 4 users;
- 5 C. linking mail piece delivery status information relating to the respective mail pieces to
- 6 the respective user identifiers, the delivery status information including information that
- 7 identifies the senders of the respective mail pieces that are directed to the identified users;
- 8 and
- 9 D. providing to a given user a listing of the respective mail pieces and the mail piece
- 10 delivery status information that is linked to the user identifier that corresponds to the given
- 11 user.

1 11. (Withdrawn) The method of tracking and tracing mail pieces of claim 10 wherein the
2 step of linking mail piece delivery status information with the user identifiers includes
3 associating therewith messages from the respective senders.

1 12. (Cancelled).

1 13. (Withdrawn) The method of tracking and tracing mail pieces of claim 11 wherein the
2 step of linking mail piece delivery status information to the user identifiers includes
3 associating therewith messages from the respective delivery services.

1 14.-19. (Cancelled).

1 20. (Withdrawn) A method for tracking and tracing mail pieces including the steps of:

2 A. associating respective users with user identifiers;

3 B. associating with the identified users respective mail pieces directed to or sent by the
4 respective users;

5 C. linking mail piece delivery status information relating to the respective mail pieces to
6 the respective user identifiers, the mail piece delivery status information including the source
7 of a given mail piece; and

8 D. providing to a given user a listing of the respective mail pieces associated with the
9 given user and the mail piece delivery status information that is linked to the user identifier
10 that is associated with the given user and further providing a graphical interface connected to
11 notify the given user of the delivery status of the respective mail pieces, the interface being
12 configured to display information concerning the source of a given mail piece.

1 21. (Currently Amended) Computer executable instructions embodied in a computer
2 readable medium, ~~the comprising~~ instructions causing the computer to perform: ~~the steps of:~~

3 A. associating respective users with user identifiers;

4 B. acquiring information from one or more mail piece sources, postal service and
5 delivery companies, about a mail piece and associating that mail piece with a user identifier;

6 ~~C. _____ and creating a digital shadow linked information~~ for each mail piece containing mail
7 ~~piece delivery status information~~ providing the user with the capability to track and trace
8 mail pieces sent to or from one or more addresses;

9 ~~C. _____ associating with the respective users mail pieces directed to or sent by the respective~~
10 ~~users and informing the user of an incoming mail piece;~~

11 D. receiving ~~mail piece delivery status linked~~ information from one or more mail piece
12 delivery companies and ~~linking associating the mail piece delivery status linked~~ information
13 relating to ~~the those~~ respective mail pieces that are assigned to the respective user identifiers
14 that are associated with the users to which the ~~mail pieces user identifiers~~ are associated;

15 E. receiving information concerning the contents of the respective mail pieces from the
16 senders of the respective mail pieces;

17 ~~F. _____ and displaying said linked information an on~~ a user's personal web page ~~and linking~~
18 ~~to the delivery status information an attachment~~ consisting of the information concerning the
19 contents of the respective mail pieces; and

20 ~~FG.~~ providing on said user's personal web page a graphical user interface adapted to
21 notify the respective users of the delivery status of the respective mail pieces, the interface
22 being configured to:

- 23 i. provide the mail piece delivery status information that is linked to the user identifiers
24 that are associated with the respective users, and
25 ii. provide to the respective users the information concerning the contents of the
26 respective mail pieces.

1 22. (Currently Amended) Computer executable instructions, embodied in a computer
2 readable medium, ~~the comprising~~ instructions causing the computer to perform: ~~the steps of:~~

3 A. associating respective users with respective user identifiers;

4 B. acquiring information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services and
5 delivery companies, and creating ~~a digital shadow linked information~~ for each mail piece
6 containing mail piece delivery status information and associating the linked information with
7 said user identifiers;

- 8 C. associating with the respective users identifiers respective mail pieces directed to or
9 sent by the respective users and informing the user of an incoming mail piece;
- 10 D. receiving mail piece delivery status information from one or more mail piece delivery
11 companies and displaying said information on a user's personal web site and linking the
12 mail piece delivery status information relating to the respective mail pieces to the respective
13 user identifiers that are associated with the users to which the mail pieces are associated;
- 14 E. receiving images of at least a portion of the contents of the respective mail pieces
15 from the respective senders and displaying said images on said user's personal web page and
16 linking to the delivery status information an attachment consisting of the images of at least a
17 portion of the contents of the respective mail pieces; and
- 18 F. providing to respective users listings of the respective mail pieces and the mail piece
19 delivery status information that are linked to the user identifiers that correspond to the
20 respective users; and
- 21 G. providing on said personal web page a graphical interface connected to:
 - 22 i. notify the respective users of the delivery status of the associated
23 respective mail pieces; and
 - 24 ii. provide to the users the images of at least a portion of the contents of the respective
25 mail pieces.

- 1 23. (Currently Amended) The computer executable instructions as defined in Claim 22
2 further comprising: Computer-executable instructions embodied in a computer readable
3 medium, the instructions causing the computer to perform the steps of:
 - 4 A. ~~associating respective users with respective user identifiers;~~
 - 5 B. ~~acquiring information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services and~~
6 ~~delivery companies, and creating a digital shadow for each mail piece containing mail piece~~
7 ~~delivery status information;~~
 - 8 C. ~~associating with the users respective mail pieces directed to or sent by the respective~~
9 ~~users and informing the user of an incoming mail piece;~~

10 ~~D. — receiving mail piece delivery status information from respective mail piece delivery~~
11 ~~companies and linking the mail piece delivery status information relating to the respective~~
12 ~~mail pieces to the respective user identifiers;~~

13 ~~E. — receiving images of information associated with respective mail pieces from~~
14 ~~respective senders and linking to the delivery status information an attachment consisting of~~
15 ~~the images of information associated with respective mail pieces;~~

16 ~~F. — providing to respective users listings of the respective mail pieces and the mail piece~~
17 ~~delivery status information that are linked to the user identifiers that correspond to the~~
18 ~~respective users; and~~

19 ~~G. — providing a graphical interface connected to:~~

20 ~~i. — notify the respective users of the delivery status of the associated respective mail~~
21 ~~pieces;~~

22 ~~ii. — provide to the users the images of information associated with the respective mail~~
23 ~~pieces; and~~

24 ~~iii provide links for the user to senders~~ respective mail piece delivery companies ~~and~~
25 respective sellers of said mail pieces allowing the user to perform at least one of: sending or
26 receiving a message, receiving or paying a bill, and verifying information based upon a
27 digital signature.

28
1 24. (Currently Amended) The computer executable instructions of claim ~~23~~ 22 in which
2 one or more messages from the senders or the mail delivery companies are received and the
3 interface is further configured to provide the one or more messages associated with the
4 respective mail pieces.

1 25. (Withdrawn) A method for tracking and tracing mail pieces including the steps of:

2 A. associating respective users with respective user identifiers;

3 B. associating with the identified users respective mail pieces directed to or sent by the
4 respective users;

5 C. linking mail piece delivery status information relating to the associated respective
6 mail pieces to the respective user identifiers, the mail piece delivery status information
7 including one or more links to information provided by senders of the respective mail pieces;
8 and

9 D. providing to a given user a listing of the associated respective mail pieces and the
10 mail piece delivery status information that is linked to the user identifier that corresponds to
11 the given user and providing a graphical interface connected to notify the given user of the
12 delivery status of the associated respective mail pieces, the interface being configured to
13 provide one or more links to the information provided by a sender of a given mail piece.

1 26. (Withdrawn) The method of tracking and tracing mail pieces of claim 25 wherein the
2 information provided by the sender includes one or more of transaction history, account
3 balance, and payment option information.

1 27. (Cancelled).

1 28. (Currently Amended) Computer-readable memory comprising computer program
2 instructions for use in providing mail piece tracking and tracing, the instructions when
3 executed causing:

4 A. one or more servers to:

5 i. acquire information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services and delivery
6 companies, and creating a ~~digital shadow~~ linked information for each mail piece containing
7 mail piece delivery status information and associating said link-linked information about the
8 mail piece delivery status information with respective user identifiers to thereby inform the
9 user of an incoming mail piece, providing the user with the capability to track and trace mail
10 pieces sent to or from one or more addresses;

11 ii. receive messages from the senders of the respective mail pieces and adding to said
12 linked information link to the delivery status information and an attachment consisting of the
13 messages from the senders of the respective mail pieces,

14 iii. produce for a user, a personal web page including listings of the ~~delivery status-linked~~
15 information for mail pieces directed to the respective users that correspond to the user
16 identifiers; and

17 iv. provide in said user's personal web page links-access to the messages in the listings
18 of the delivery status information; and

19 B. one or more browsers to provide to the respective users associated with the user
20 identifiers access to the listings of the ~~delivery status-linked~~ information and the ~~linked~~
21 messages.

1 29. (Currently Amended) The cComputer-readable memory as defined in Claim 28
2 further comprising: computer program instructions for use in providing mail piece tracking
3 and tracing, the instructions when executed causing:

4 A. said one or more servers being configured to:

5 i. ~~acquire information from one or more mail piece sources, postal services and~~
6 ~~delivery companies and creating a digital shadow for each mail piece containing mail piece~~
7 ~~delivery status information and link the mail piece delivery status information with~~
8 ~~respective user identifiers to thereby inform the user of an incoming mail piece;~~

9 ii. ~~receive sender transaction information from respective senders of the mail pieces and~~
10 ~~link the sender transaction information to the delivery status information;~~

11 iii. ~~produce on a user's personal web page listings of the delivery status information for~~
12 ~~mail pieces directed to the respective users that correspond to the user identifiers; and~~

13 iv. ~~associate the links to the~~ with the linked information, transaction information with the
14 listings of the delivery status information on said user's personal web page allowing the user
15 to perform at least one of: sending or receiving a message, receiving or paying a bill, and
16 verifying information based upon a digital signature.; ~~and~~

17 B. ~~one or more browsers to provide access to the delivery status information linked to a~~
18 ~~given user identifier and also to links to the transaction information that associated with the~~
19 ~~delivery status information.~~

1 30. (Currently Amended) The cComputer-readable memory as defined in Claim 28

2 further comprising: computer program instructions for use in providing mail piece tracking
3 and tracing, the instructions when executed causing:

4 A. said one or more servers being configured to:

5 i. ~~acquire information from one or more mail piece sources and delivery companies and~~
6 ~~create a digital shadow for each mail piece containing mail piece delivery status information~~
7 ~~from respective mail delivery companies and link mail piece delivery status information with~~
8 ~~respective user identifiers to thereby inform the user of an incoming mail piece;~~

9 ii. ~~receive information relating to the contents of the respective mail pieces from the~~
10 ~~respective senders and link to the delivery status information an attachment consisting of the~~
11 ~~information relating to the contents of the respective mail pieces;~~

12 iii. ~~produce listings of the mail piece delivery status information for mail pieces directed~~
13 ~~to the respective users that correspond to the user identifiers; and~~

14 iv. ~~include in the listings the information relating to the contents of the respective mail~~
15 ~~pieces; and~~

16 B. ~~one or more browsers to provide access to the delivery status information linked to a~~
17 ~~given user identifier and further to provide access to the associated information relating to the~~
18 ~~contents of the mail pieces.~~

1 31. (Cancelled).

1 32. (Withdrawn) Computer-readable memory comprising computer program instructions
2 for use in providing mail piece tracking and tracing, the instructions when executed causing:

3 A. one or more servers to

4 link mail piece delivery status information with user identifiers, the delivery status
5 information for a given mail piece including

6 i. a sender identifier,

7 ii. a mail type identifier,

8 iii. a delivery service identifier, and

9 iv. related messages from the sender and the delivery service, and

- 10 v. produce listings of the delivery status information for mail pieces directed to the
11 respective users that correspond to the user identifiers; and
12 B. one or more browsers to provide access to the delivery status information linked to a
13 given user identifier

1 33. (Cancelled).

1 34 (Withdrawn) A method of operating a computer system, the method including the
2 steps of:

- 3 A. associating a given user session with a user identifier;
4 B. retaining messages relating to the status of the session at a server and including in
5 each message a message sequence number and an attribute that is associated with the user
6 identifier; and
7 C. using the messages to continue the session from a point at which the session last
8 communicated with the server, in response to the user identifier being presented at a node
9 that communicates with the server.

1 35. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 34 further including a step of maintaining an
2 index of the messages, the index being sorted by the attribute that is associated with the user
3 identifier.

1 36. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 further including:

- 2 A. a step of communicating through the session and providing information
3 relating to a mailing label;
4 B. in the step of retaining messages retaining messages that include the
5 information relating to the mailing label;
6 C. in the step of continuing the session presenting the retained information
7 relating to the mailing label; and
8 D. a step of ending the session by printing the mailing label in accordance with
9 the retained information.

1 37. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36 further including:
2 A. in the step of communicating through the session providing information
3 relating to postage for a mail piece;
4 B. in the step of retaining messages retaining messages that include the information
5 relating to the postage;
6 C. in the step of continuing the session presenting the retained information relating to
7 the postage; and
8 D. in the step of ending the session printing the postage in accordance with the
9 retained information.

1 38. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 35 further including:
2 A. a step of communicating through the session and providing information
3 relating to postage for a mail piece;
4 B. in the step of retaining messages retaining messages that include the information
5 relating to the postage;
6 C. in the step of continuing the session presenting the retained information relating to the
7 postage; and
8 D. a step of ending the session by printing the postage in accordance with the
9 retained information.

1 39. (Withdrawn) A method of operating a computer network including the steps of:
2 A. associating a user session with a user identifier that is presented to gain
3 access to information maintained by the network from a first node that communicates with
4 the network;
5 B. retaining a queue of messages relating to the user session and associating the
6 queue with the user identifier; and
7 C. in response to the user identifier being later presented at the first node or a
8 second node that communicates over the network, continuing the user session at the first or

9 second node by using the messages to present the session at the point at which the session
10 last communicated with the server.

1 40. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 36 wherein the step of retaining a queue of
2 messages includes indexing the messages by the user identifier.

1 41. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37 wherein the step of retaining a queue of
2 messages further includes maintaining the queue at each of a plurality of interconnected
3 nodes, a given one of the interconnected nodes at which the user identifier is provided
4 presenting the user session at the point at which the session last communicated with the
5 server.

1 42. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 38 further including conducting the user session
2 by communicating over the network using a browser or a client executable.

1 43. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 37 wherein the step of presenting the user
2 identifier includes providing a machine-readable code to a scanner that communicates with
3 the node.

1 44. (Withdrawn) A method of operating a postal service computer system, the method
2 including the steps of:
3 A. associating a given user postal mailing label session with a user identifier;
4 B. retaining messages relating to the status of the session at a server and
5 including in each message a message sequence number and an attribute that is associated
6 with the user identifier, the messages further including mailing label information provided
7 through the session; and
8 C. using the messages to continue the session from a point at which the session
9 last communicated with the server by presenting the mailing label information provided

10 through the session, in response to the user identifier being presented at a node that
11 communicates with the server.

1 45. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 44 further including a step of maintaining an
2 index of the messages, the index being sorted by the attribute that is associated with the user
3 identifier.

1 46. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 45 further including the step of ending the
2 continued session by printing the mailing label in accordance with the retained
3 information.

1 47. (New) A mail piece tracing and tracking system comprising:
2 one or more servers associated with multiple package delivery systems coupled to
3 a network, said one or more servers interfacing with a database storing user identifiers,
4 and said one or more servers associating a user identifier with linked information about
5 packages that are being sent to or from a user of the system using said package delivery
6 systems, said linked information being associated with one or more user identifiers; and
7 a plurality of nodes connected by said network to one or more of said servers,
8 said nodes running software executables that communicate directly with the server, said
9 nodes also having access to web browsers allowing the user to login in and inspect linked
10 information about each package that has been assigned to its user identifier providing the
11 user with the capability to track and trace mail pieces sent to or from one or more
12 addresses.